1: Jenness--87-88 (1913-16) 1922 Copper Eskimo
116, 462

"The Copper Eskimos, like most hunting tribes, discriminate considerably between the work of the men and the work of the women. As a rule, the heavier tasks devolve on the men. They do most of the hunting, build the snow huts, and erect the heavy deerskin tents that are used in the spring and the fall. Their spare time is employed in minor work subsidiary to this, for example in making or mending their tools and weapons. During migrations the man does all the loading of the sled, his wife handing him the household goods through the doorway or through a hole in the wall. She helps him, however, to lash up the sled, while the children, if there are any, harness the dogs. On the trail the woman pulls ahead of the dogs, but the man hauls just in front of the sled, [88] where he can urge on the dogs from behind; the son has a place beside his father, the daughter beside her mother. In the summer packing, the man generally carries the tent, with his tools and weapons on top of it; the woman has her own and her husband's sleeping gear, the lamp, if one is carried, and the cooking pot, while the children carry their own sleeping bags and their bows and playthings."

"All the cooking and sewing fall on the women. In summer this often includes the gathering of fuel, though the children are usually sent out for this purpose. A man rarely condescends to gather fuel, and then only when he is alone with his family. Occasionally, in summer, he will cook a pot of meat if his wife is engaged for the moment in some other occupation, such as dressing skins, and he himself has nothing to do. The men often help their wives to scrape the skins, especially in the fall, when the daylight is short and new clothes are urgently needed for the approaching winter. Sometimes too they do a little sewing on their own account. An old man named Tusayok made a pair of water-boots for himself in the spring of 1915; the women were quite suprised at the excellence of his sewing, and talked about it for a long time afterwards.

Vice versa, a few of the women take part in the hunting and sealing. The eldest of Uloksak's three wives, indeed, was quite a noted caribou hunter. The same woman sometimes went sealing, as did also Milukkattak, Avranna's wife. The two of them went out together one day, leaving their husbands to mind the huts, and they often taunted the men with this afterwards. During my stay with Ikpakhuak the old man was teaching his little step-daughter to seal. She was only twelve years old at the time, and when she did finally transfix a seal in the winter of 1916 she had to call to one of the other hunters to help her drag her victim on to the ice. It is only the younger women, however, who go out hunting, though everyone, men, women and children, have to take

part in the organized caribou-drive. Everyone, too, has to fish with rod and line through holes in the ice during the spring and fall. Even in their fishing, though, there are certain distinctions. Everyone uses the rod and line, but only the men as a rule employ spears. When the salmon are trapped in weirs during the late spring the men race about in the water jabbing at them with their spears, while the women catch them with their hands in the little stone caverns where they take refuge and string them on long seal-skin lines."

1: Jenness--88 (1913-16) 1922 Copper Eskimo
116, 462

"Very few women, I believe, can manage a kayak. Higilak attempted to paddle her husband's kayak one day, but she was unable to turn it round without capsizing it, and had great difficulty in making the land again. Few women too can build a snow hut, though all of them can make a perpendicular wall of snow five or six feet high. They know exactly how the hut should be built, however, even though they are unable to do it themselves. I saw an old woman directing a youth how to produce the spiral in the second tier of blocks, though the same woman, when called upon to make a short extension to the passage, was as awkward in fitting the blocks together as the merest novice."

321 412 tool, and the drill. In our time nearly all these tools had steel or iron blades, and a fifth had been added, a small saw with a blade of hoop iron. Saws were not numerous, however, and it was still a common sight to see a native scoring deep cuts in bone or antler with his grooving tool and then breaking out sections with his adze. The curved whittling knife gave the final shape, and rubbing, first with stone or sand and then with a strip of hide, the smoothness and polish. Musk-ox horn alone was susceptible of a different treatment; to make from it ladles and scoops, the natives split it longitudinally, steamed it over their cooking pots, then opened it out and bent it to shape by simple pressure and hammering.

237 There was current among the Copper Eskimo one other substance similar to the foregoing, baleen, but it was rather scarce, and in the eastern part of the territory almost unknown. Whether it came from stranded whales, or was brought in from the west, I did not discover. The natives used it, apparently, 237 for fishing lines only, lines mainly for catching tomcod during the winter months 229 when the more usual lines of sinew tended to become brittle with encrusted ice. 283 I never saw them cut or split baleen, but doubtless they used the whittling knife for this purpose.

HIDES AND SINEW

237 [433] It is hard for the civilized inhabitant of a warmer country to realize the immense importance of skins in the domestic economy of the Copper Eskimo. They provide him with clothes and bedding throughout both winter and summer, bags in which to store his clothing, a tent for use nearly half the year when a snow-hut was either uncomfortable or impossible, a cover for his kayak, straps and lashings for his sled, harnesses and traces for the dogs, lines and lashings for harpoons and other weapons, packing lines, dog packs, water buckets, pokes for meat and blubber, and other articles for which Europeans utilize cloth, rope, or metal. It was, consequently, of the utmost importance to the native that he should know how to treat skins to the best advantage. Fortunately, the two animals on which he depended most for his food, the seal and the caribou, were precisely the ones whose hides were the most useful.

281 [225] *Seal Skins.* The Copper Eskimo had two methods of skinning a seal. They generally made a cut around the base of each flipper, another around the neck, and a third down the belly, after which they separated the skin from the blubber with a knife. As it was impossible to remove all the blubber in this way, the skin was then soaked in warm water. Holding one end in her mouth while the [462] other remained in the pot, the woman (for the work almost invariably fell on [412] the housewife) scraped it thoroughly with her curved knife. As soon as the weather was warm enough she set it out to dry, sometimes on top of the house, sometimes on the ground, sometimes pegged over and around a block of snow.

A sealskin thus dried was roughly oval in shape and still retained the hair [415] on the outside. If you folded in the ends, doubled it over and tied a line to [492] each end, you had the common Copper Eskimo fishing bag; if you laced each end across through the holes by which it was pegged out, you had a dog pack, broad and flat in the middle where it rested on the animal's back, and bag-shaped at each end for holding the meat or clothing. The hair was no 281 disadvantage in such skins; indeed, for raincoats and for spring foot gear it 294 was indispensable, but as the skin was more supple without it, it was generally removed by resoaking in warm water and scraping with a knife. To soften the skin still more, and to change the outer surface from a dark colour to white, it was subjected to further scraping, and, after drying, rubbed between the hands and chewed between the teeth, when odd scraps that came away found lodging in the chewer's stomach. From these creamy white skins were made the sealskin

shoes worn by both sexes during the greater part of the year. Steeped in urine for several hours they became waterproof, and served for summer boots, water buckets, quivers, and other articles. 281 294

For lines and lashings (which the men made, not the women) it was not necessary to tan the skin; after the removal of the hair the man merely soaked it for a third time in warm water, and cut it in a continuous spiral with his curved whittling knife, while his wife or a friend held the severed parts taut and slightly apart. In cutting he simply pressed the knife, guiding it with his thumb from below, but wherever the strip was very narrow he generally sawed the blade up and down, holding the severed parts in his left hand and guiding the blade with the left index. Newly cut lines were stretched taut between two or more poles out of doors to dry. 281 283 [462]

The second method of skinning a seal was used only when the owner required a bag with a small opening for storing blubber. The woman then cut the skin around the base of the neck and from the bottom of one hind flipper across to the other. To separate the flesh from the skin—and as far as possible also the blubber—she circled the long snow-knife round between them from each end; then by drawing back the flippers and severing them at the joints with her curved knife, she could draw off the skin over the tail. Subsequently she cut away most of the adhering blubber and sewed up the bottom, leaving the neck open to be tied with a sealskin cord when the poke was filled. In most cases she sewed a strap handle to each end to facilitate handling, as these pokes when filled with blubber weighed from 150 to 200 pounds; if the poke was small, however, she substituted for the straps a short stick thrust through the neck. The Copper Eskimo never skinned an animal through the mouth after the manner of the western Eskimo, or closed their pokes with stoppers. 281 225 [412]

Although bearded seals were numerous in Dolphin and Union strait, the Eskimo secured very few; and they used for harpoon and sled lines most of the skins of those they did kill, though they were fully aware of the superiority of bearded over foetid sealskins for foot gear. Even their kayaks they covered with the skin of the much commoner foetid seal. Naturally, they treated both kinds of skin in the same way. [136] [501]

Caribou Skins. More important even than sealskins to the Copper Eskimo were the caribou skins from which he made his bedding and the greater part of his clothes, as well as dog harnesses, spring and summer tents, and many other articles that were absolutely indispensable. He skinned the caribou in a way slightly different from that of the ordinary white hunter or from that of the Indians to the south. Beginning at the throat, he cut right down the belly to the tail, then from the hock of each leg up the back as far as the knee, continuing up the inside of the thigh until he reached the incision along the belly. He next punched away the skin from the body down one side, drew out the tail and pulled the skin off down to the feet, where he cut it away at the level of the front of the hoof. Then he slit it down the side of the cheek through the eye and round the base of the horn, and punched it loose with the handle of the hunting knife. Rolling the animal over, he pulled out the skin from below, punched it free of the whole body, and stripped it off down the remaining two legs. A final cut down this cheek similar to the one on the other side, and a few more punches, completed the operation. Thus the skin of the head was removed in three sections that joined at the neck; but the middle strip ran from between the horns to the top of the nose only, as the Eskimo never troubled to remove the skin around the nostrils. Whenever the horns were in the velvet the hunter could jerk the skin over them; but with old bulls whose horns had many branches and roots almost meeting on the forehead, he was often satisfied to strip only the cheeks and leave the skin on the middle of the face untouched. Occasionally he slit from the nose down to midway between the horns, leaving 281 281 224

a large hole where these protruded through and two small holes that marked the eye sockets. The ears he usually cut off at the roots, and pulled them out of the skin with his teeth at his leisure; but in certain circumstances, when it was forbidden to use a knife, he pulled free the outer integument on the spot.

In the late spring, when the caribou was putting on a new coat, the winter hair remained longest on the throat and belly. As this part was useless for clothing, the hair being prone to shed, the Eskimo frequently preserved only the part on which the new coat had already formed and threw the rest of the skin away. In such cases the preliminary incisions for removing the skin followed the outlines of the short hair. Often, however, the native anticipated the natural shedding of the winter hair by pulling it out with his thumb and fingers, leaving the new coat very short and spotted with white hairs, but in this condition highly prized. Later in the season, when the belly of the animal was covered with short white hair, invaluable for trimming, he made a cut along each flank and removed that part of the skin before detaching the remainder.

Blood stains were extracted by rubbing or stamping the skin in hard snow, which acted like damp blotting paper; or by steeping it in cold water and squeezing the hair. The Copper Eskimo woman was very careful not to allow a green skin to dry before scraping away with her curved knife the fat that still adhered to it; and as these scrapings were pure fat, she generally ate them at once, or put them aside for future consumption. Then she stretched the skin out to dry by pegging it to the ground with sticks or weighting down the edges with stones; the white belly skin and the large short-haired skins intended for bedding she always pegged down in order to stretch them as much as possible. When travelling across country day after day in the short Arctic summer, the skin was laid over the back of the pack or across a long pole; and at every halt it was stretched out afresh on the ground to hasten the drying, because a green skin weighed twice as much as a dry one. Once the skin was dry it could be laid aside and not touched again until needed. Then the owner sewed up the rents and scraped the whole underside with the copper- (now iron-) bladed scraper (See p. 84). The woman (or man, for the men often scraped skins while the women sewed them) sat back on the sleeping platform, or on the ground outside the tent, and stretched out the skin in front of her. Holding it tightly pinioned at the bottom between her crossed legs, she pulled it taut above the knee with her left hand and scraped rapidly downwards away from her with the right. A sudden relaxation of the leg, and a quick jerk, found her scraping in a new place. To the onlooker her body seemed strained and her attitude very uncomfortable, but long practice greatly reduced the fatigue, though the labour really was hard. Indeed I have seen the perspiration rolling down a woman's face as she scraped a skin outdoors when the temperature was below zero Fahrenheit.

The Copper Eskimo woman often ate the scrapings that came away during this operation, although they contained very little fat. To soften the skin still further she rubbed tepid water over its under surface, folded it up, and laid it on one side for a few hours. Then she scraped it again, this time with an instrument made from the shoulder blade of a musk-ox, which merely stretched and softened the skin without removing anything from its surface (See p. 83).

The stretching and softening of the skin was usually the last process it underwent before it was made up into clothing. If, however, the woman desired the skin without fur, as for making the upper legs of her long boots, she scraped the hair from the dry skin with her curved knife. Copper Eskimo clothing was often decorated with red, black, or white bands; the white was the natural colour of the skin; the red was produced by rubbing with litharge; and the black parts were either untanned sealskin, or else seal or caribou skin stained with galena. Ordinary dirt stains on white deerskin could be removed with dry snow.

I know of only one source for this material that is used at the present time by the Copper Eskimo, Port Epworth at the mouth of Tree River in Coronation Gulf where the talc chlorite schist occurs as an inclusion in the granite. It is very coarse in texture, and of a pale grey colour, as can be seen in unused specimens or by fracturing an old one.

Nevertheless, there seem once to have been other sources. An old woman who lived at the east end of Coronation Gulf told me that long ago her people used to make lamps and pots from stone obtained in a quarry on Rae River. An early explorer, John Rae, did find soapstone at the fall 10 miles from the mouth of this river,[1] but only in thin beds, which might explain why the Eskimo ceased to use this source. Then again, I purchased from a Coronation Gulf native a little toy lamp of typical Copper Eskimo shape (Figure 50), which was certainly not made from the Port Epworth soapstone, for it is much finer in texture and of a pale green colour. In the same region I obtained also an unfinished implement, resembling an imitation lance-head, which was made from a very similar soapstone, but is yellowish green. Finally, from the west coast of Hudson Bay, probably from Chesterfield Inlet, the museum has a toy lamp (IV.C.165) that resembles in colour, texture, and graining the green toy lamp bought in Coronation Gulf; in shape and dimensions the two are practically identical except that the Hudson Bay specimen has no shelf. Morley E. Wilson, of the Geological Survey, Canada, expressed the opinion that these lamps almost certainly came from the same quarry, because this type of soapstone is exceedingly rare in Canada, and that the implement like a lance-head was also derived from the same locality. It is worth noting that there are deposits of soapstone near the mouth of Back River.

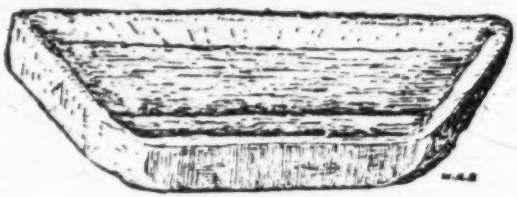

Figure 50. Toy lamp, of pale green soapstone. IV.D.613. 1/1.

Up to a few years ago natives from Dolphin and Union Strait in the west to Amundsen Gulf in the east often migrated to the Port Epworth quarry in the spring of the year in order to manufacture their own lamps and pots. Each family usually made more vessels than it required for its own use in order to have some for barter when it returned home the following autumn or winter.

Women and children often fashioned the smaller lamps and pots. The larger ones were the work of the men, although once they were finished and handed over to the housewife they became her exclusive property. No special skill was required; children 10 years of age could make small lamps just as good as those made by their elders. A little more care was necessary in working at a pot, because the rock, though soft, was somewhat brittle, and the walls and bottom had to be comparatively thin; but even this was not beyond the ability of a child, as it required patience rather than technical skill. With his crude copper tools a native could quarry out his block and make the largest lamp that was ever used in about 3 days, and the largest pot in no more than a day longer; iron tools, of course, appreciably lessened the time. First, he chiselled

[1] Richardson, Sir John: Journal of a Boat Voyage through Rupert's Land, vol. I, p. 312. London, 1851

354 352 two or three stones supported the lamp; and on short winter journeys, when the lamp served only for light, it was simply placed on a block of snow. As already stated, it was seldom employed during the summer months.

354 824 [137] [239] [415] Unlike nearly all Eskimo tribes the Copper Eskimo seldom or never used moss for the lamp-wick, but substituted the seeds of the cottongrass, *Eriophorum angustifolium*, or, more rarely, the catkins of the dwarf willow, either of which gave a more smokeless flame. *Eriophorum angustifolium* matures about the beginning of September, and it was at that season the women gathered the seeds into small bags made of loon skin, marmot skin, or other convenient material. They gathered a large supply, as in midwinter the wick needed daily renewing; and they deferred the separation of the seeds from the stalks until leisure moments in camp.

354 372 237 462 [171] *Lighting and Tending the Lamp.* The Copper Eskimo lighted and tended their lamps in the same way as the Eskimo of Smith Sound[1] except that they did not chew the blubber and spit it into the lamp. The housewife took out of a sealskin poke two or three strips of blubber a foot or more long by several inches wide, and with a specially designed hammer of musk-ox horn (*See* Figure 63) pounded them on the table to break up the cells.[2] She then laid them in the well of the lamp, when a little oil began at once to accumulate on the bottom, unless the weather was extremely cold. In this oil she soaked [824] her eriophorum seeds, and arranged them along the lip of the lamp in a continuous line so that their lower edges touched the bottom of the well (or at least dipped into the oil that shortly accumulated), and the upper edges projected about a quarter of an inch above the rim. To light the wick she pinched it up into little points 2 or 3 inches apart, which readily caught fire from the torch; and by patting up adjacent parts of the wick with her lamp-trimmer she quickly produced a continuous smokeless flame rising to a height of about three-quarters of an inch. As the heat melted the oil out of the strips of blubber, she removed them to the back shelf of the lamp until they drained; then, later, she threw them to the dogs. Sometimes, if the lamp already contained a certain quantity of oil, she placed fresh strips of pounded blubber on the same shelf instead of in the well, so that the oil would not accumulate too rapidly and drip over the outer edges of the lamp. The Copper Eskimo had no device for melting the blubber on a stick or shelf, such as was common in both the eastern and western Arctic.

354 462 Hough[3] says that lamp-trimming "only reached perfection in the old women of the tribe, who can prepare a lamp so that it will give a good, steady flame for several hours, while usually half an hour is the best that can be expected." This is not true of the Copper Eskimo. There, the women naturally have more experience than the men, and on the average are more skilful, but many a hunter can tend the wick just as successfully as his wife. A lamp is seldom allowed to smoke; one of the inmates, be it the man, his wife, or even one of the children, is sure to notice it and pat down the wick.

354 415 [171] The same writer states in another passage[4] that "the lamp and the pot usually agree as to size, the rule being that the length of the pot shall be equal to the length of the wick edge." Among the Copper Eskimo, as in Smith Sound and, I believe, elsewhere, the sizes of the two vessels bear no direct relation to one another. For obvious reasons the wick edge of the lamp should be no shorter than the bottom of the pot; but it may be, and often is, much longer, for with her lamp-trimmer the housewife can readily adjust the flame to whatever length she desires.

[113] [1] Cf. Sverdrup, H. P.: Contributions to the Ethnology and Anthropology of the Polar Eskimos; Meddelelser om Grønland, vol. XXXIV, p. 329 f.

[2] Polar bear fat was occasionally used instead of seal blubber, and probably fat of any kind in emergencies.

[3] Hough: op. cit., p. 1054.

[4] Hough: op. cit., p. 1057.

SNOW KNIVES OF ANTLER AND BONE

412 32 [192] To chop up the blocks of snow in the cooking pot, women frequently used a knife of antler, more rarely of bone, known as *hauuyaq*, a light, roughly made tool, two specimens of which are shown in Figure 78. Many women, however, simply used the curved knife or *ulo* for this purpose.

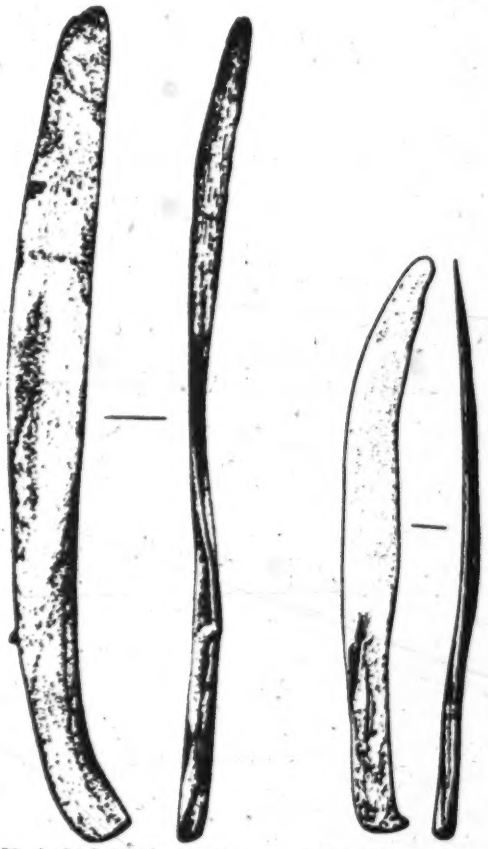

Figure 78. Antler knives for chopping snow. IV.D.188, 275. Approx. 1/2.

[171] These antler knives are identical with those used in the Hudson Bay area for scraping ice from kayaks, but the Copper Eskimo had little or no occasion to employ them for this purpose. A woman sometimes used one to chop snow [462] [342] for filling in gaps between the snow blocks while her husband completed the building of a hut, but even this was unusual.

lines, harpoon lines, and lashings of various kinds. No doubt the Copper Eskimo in emergencies made use of sinew from other sources, for the Mackenzie Delta natives sometimes use the sinew on the tail of the fox, which is about a foot long and said to be of excellent quality. 283

After the flesh had been carefully scraped away the sinew was allowed to dry a little; but as prolonged exposure to the heat of the sun rendered it stiff and brittle, it was generally stored away at once in a bag. The value of a slab of back sinew was fairly high everywhere along the Arctic coast.[1] Caribou were very abundant in the Copper Eskimo country until about 1919, but in the absence of linen or cotton thread—which in any case is less suitable for skin garments—sinew was in such great demand that it was constantly traded from one family or group to another. [435] [136] [437]

For ordinary sewing a thin strand was stripped off the slab with the teeth or thumb nail, drawn through the teeth to remove all roughness, and rolled against the cheek to twist it into a single smooth thread. Waterboots, however, called for a stouter three-ply thread, made by the women and girls in the house, where they fastened the ends of the threads to the drying rack, and caught the middle strand between the second and third fingers while they crossed the two outer ones with the thumbs and index fingers. Fishing lines of leg sinew were plaited similarly of three strands, but the harpoon lines, which required to be flat, had from four to eight strands, sometimes even more. Twisting, as with rope, was an unknown art.

Sewing Bags and Baskets. A Copper Eskimo woman without her needle and thread would have been as uncomfortable as a European housewife without her knitting. Sewing was no impediment to gossip: the woman sat on the sleeping skins, her legs doubled under her or stretched out in front, and plied her needle and her tongue at the same rate. Always she sewed from right to left; only a left-handed person sewed in the opposite direction. She held the thimble on the first finger (not on the middle, as we do), and pushed the needle through the skin with the side of the thimble, not with its top, if indeed it had a top. Then she caught the point between the thumb and middle finger, drew the needle out, turned it on its side, and with her thimble behind it pulled through the thread and reinserted the needle for the next stitch. Usually she did not tauten the thread until the second stitch. 294 462 [516] [521]

There was more sewing to be done at certain seasons than at others. Thus, in the autumn, all the new clothing for the winter had to be finished before the sun disappeared below the horizon for the long winter night. The women then sewed from early morning until late at night, with only brief respites to cook the meals or to pass the time of day with neighbours. A woman who had no children to sew for was, of course, less busy; the mother of a family was obliged not only to make the clothes for the whole household, but to train her girls to be dressmakers also. The latter began their training with odd scraps of skin, which they learned to join with neat close stitches. Later, they mended rents in their own clothing, and made dolls fully clothed from head to foot. Many men could make their own trousers and socks, and even sealskin shoes in an emergency; but only a very few could cut out a well-fitting coat or make a pair of waterboots that would really keep out the water. Even the women never attained great skill in these last-mentioned tasks until long after marriage, and a young wife often sought the assistance of an older relative or friend. [221] 294 462 868

The work-basket of most women was a bag of caribou or some other skin, or else, more rarely, a neatly worked basket of coiled willow twigs held in place with willow-bark stitching (Figures 91, 92). All the baskets that I saw were 415 [285]

[1] In 1914 the price of one slab of reindeer back sinew at Barrow, Alaska, was $1.

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 90]

227 321 237 [226] Indeed, they caught more tomcod with their spears during the winter months than with hooks. The Copper Eskimo never employed the artificial baits of stone or ivory, carved into the shape of fish, that were current among the Eskimo to the westward.

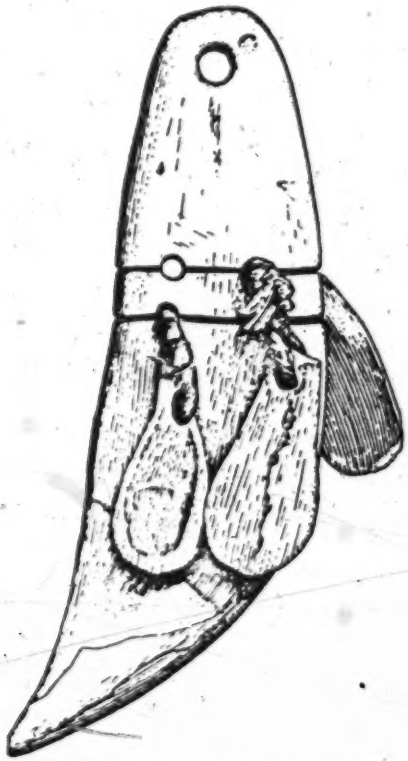

Figure 131. Lure of polar bear's tooth. IV.D.706. 3/2.

227 237 [462] *Gorges.* Women, rarely men, caught a few trout and salmon with the gorge, which was merely a pointed bone wrapped inside the body of any small fish and attached by a line to the shore. Figure 132 is copied from a rough field sketch of a gorge used by a woman on Victoria Island. It was about 6 inches long, made from a splinter of caribou leg bone, and not distinguishable in any way from the needle used for stringing the salmon that were caught in weirs. I never saw a double-pointed gorge.

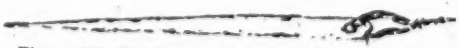

Figure 132. Bone gorge, for trout and salmon. 1/3.

Needles for Stringing Fish. Most needles used for stringing salmon at weirs were roughly shaped splinters of caribou leg bone (Figure 133), but in

P. 42-G.

Photo by J. J. O'Neill.

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Wives and daughters pulled in front of the dogs.

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

ing my brief absence. It was now mid-April, and the natives were travelling in easy stages toward the land, allowing a few days between each migration for the women and children to freight forward the pokes of blubber and the men to resume their sealing. All the families had adopted skin tents in place of snow-houses, or, if their tents were still cached on the coast, they roofed circular walls of snow with the skins of caribou and musk-oxen. The camp was mottled with clothing, suspended from sticks, to dry in the warm sun; and at every little snow-flurry the women rushed from the tents to beat the light flakes from each garment before they melted and spoiled the fur. Night and day had merged into one another, the sun disappearing for one hour only at midnight; and the temperature remained fairly constant around 15°F., except at noon, when it mounted at times to the freezing-point.

The younger women, who were as well versed as the men in the peculiar habits of the seal, often went out with the hunters to escape the monotonous care of clothes and blubber. Each seal appeared to have its special territory, like a bird in the nesting season; and every half-hour or so it came to the surface to breathe. In summer, with open water all around, it rose at any place; but when the sea froze in the autumn it could reach the atmosphere only by breaking through the thin sheet of ice that covered its domain. The breathing-holes made at that season remained open

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

kinsman Ikpuck. For the rest, he was an energetic hunter, a good sealer, and a very skilful fisherman, qualities that rank high in an Eskimo community. His marriage yielded him no children, but his wife, whose first husband had died a few years earlier, brought a fourteen-year-old son in her train.

Even the children had many little duties to perform in this our last camp on the sea-ice, while the fathers hunted seals and caribou, and the mothers sorted out the household things they intended to leave on the coast, or filled the pokes of blubber they were storing away for the autumn months. Each family had two pokes that weighed, when full, between three hundred and four hundred pounds, and our most pressing task for the moment was to dispose of them. Most people would have found it very unpleasant to cram a bag with oily seal blubber; but the women, accustomed to the task from childhood, merely put on their oldest clothes, rolled up the coat-sleeves, and buried their arms in the greasy mass without the slightest hesitation.

Not all the oil that exuded from the blubber found its way into the pokes. The women rubbed some of it over their faces to mitigate the effect of sunburn, and recommended the same treatment for my own weather-beaten countenance. Sunburn hardly seemed credible when the temperature of the atmosphere remained constantly below the freezing-point; but the sun now shone throughout the twenty-four hours of

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usual starting-point for Eskimos travelling to the Great Sound, since the hills immediately north were lower than at any other place either to east or west. Okowyarvik means "the Home of the Dryad," not the wood-nymph of that name, who could never find a home in this desolate land, but the *Dryas integrifolia*, a tiny flowering plant distantly related to our rose. The Eskimos generally paid little attention to the plants around them because they added nothing to their food supply; but the dryad, heather, and willow furnished their fuel during the summer months, and in the hills heather and willow were not procurable.

We lingered a week at "Dryad Harbour," for the season was still early and the snow that covered the land would last another month. While the men were hunting caribou the women overhauled their bags of clothing, putting aside all the heavier garments not needed again till winter. To these they added the furniture of the snow-huts, the long wooden tables, the drying frames, and a few of the stone lamps. Each family made a separate pile of its possessions, and on top of each pile the men deposited their sealing weapons, useless for the life on land. I myself cached nearly all my provisions—pemmican, rice, oatmeal, hard bread, and tea sufficient to last me about a month; only a little tea and cornmeal I retained on my sled, to ease the transition from the "balanced" diet of

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BREAD FROM THE WATERS

A T-shaped lake larger than most of the lakes in the vicinity was the site of our next camp. We deposited our packs on its shore and went out on the ice to fish.

Ikpuck and I dug holes, but Icehouse wandered over to a sun-lit pool at one corner and dropped in her line. It hooked a trout even before it touched bottom, and in the space of four hours she drew from this one spot twenty-nine trout and two salmon, although Ikpuck and I, who dug holes not a hundred yards behind her, caught only ten trout between us. It may have been the sunlight alone that attracted the fish; more probably the stream that rushed down the neighbouring slope washed many insects into the pool and made it an unusually rich feeding-ground.

My family thoroughly enjoyed the solitude and freedom of our new camping-place, where we could come and go, eat and sleep, as fancy moved us. The children, Jennie and Knife-Blade, counted this period a holiday, and when fishing grew monotonous, stripped off their clothes and splashed in the water, or snared the longspurs and sandpipers, or shot at ptarmigan with their bows and arrows. Sometimes they vanished for several hours, and returned in the early morning, while we were sleeping, merely to eat and rest before their next excursion. Their parents imposed no restraints on them and exacted no duties. Whenever they were absent, and Icehouse wanted to cook, Ikpuck, forgetting the pride of a hunter, would fill

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462 her bag with dryads and bring her water from the lake. No eye but mine saw his undignified conduct, and I was one of the family.

224 Leaving Icehouse here at her fishing, Ikpuck and I went east to look for caribou. The succession of ridges and lakes continued unbroken, and by dropping our lines here and there through promising cracks in the ice we captured five trout. In the evening we sighted our first caribou, two bulls grazing in a meadow of green moss beside a distant lake. There was no cover within a thousand yards, but we stalked them patiently for several hours and at last managed to crawl near enough on hands and knees to drop both animals at the first volley. Then, piling the carcasses in a heap for Icehouse and Jennie to bring in later, we started back for camp fifteen or more miles away, packing only the skins and hind-quarters. I was very weary, for we had travelled twenty-four hours and eaten nothing; and once, as we rested on the brow of a hill, I fell
539 sound asleep. But Ikpuck gently wakened me, saying
[484] that our limbs would grow stiff if we lingered too long; and to beguile the march he related quaint stories of the Eskimo "long ago." Most of them were about birds and animals, and resembled Æsop's fables without the morals. Although I was too weary to pay much heed to them, one story concerning a giant remained in my memory.

"You remember Putulik," he said, "the island where